

Message Text

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PAGE 01 Lening 00731 080630Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4093

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PROP, EAGR, ECON, UR

SUBJECT: ZNANIYE LECTURER COMMENTS ON SOVIET MEAT SUPPLY

REF 77 LENINGRAD 442

1. ZNANIYE LECTURER N.E. ELBAKIAN, IDENTIFIED AS ECONOMIST, ADMITTED ON FEB. 26 CONTINUING SHORTFALL IN SOVIET MEAT PRODUCTION WHEN RESPONDING TO QUESTION WHY THERE IS NO MEAT IN SEVERAL SOVIET CITIES. HE ADDED THAT EGG PRODUCTION IS LIKEWISE BELOW NORM IN LENINGRAD OBLAST'. ACCORDING TO ELBAKIAN'S FIGURES, CURRENT ANNUAL MEAT PRODUCTION IS ABOUT 21 MILLION TONS, OR ABOUT 60,000 TONS DAILY AS AGAINST A NEED FOR 80,000. THIS SHORTFALL WAS BLAMED ON RESIDUAL EFFECTS OF 1975 DROUGHT HARVEST OF 145 MILLION TONS OF GRAIN WHICH HAVE STILL NOT BEEN OVERCOME DESPITE BUMPER HARVEST OF 226 MILLION TONS IN 1976. EGG PRODUCTION FOR LENINGRAD OBLAST' WAS PUT AT 900 MILLION PER ANNUM AS OPPOSED TO NEED FOR 1.3-1.4 BILLION.

2. ON BRIGHT SIDE, ELBAKIAN REPORTED THAT TENTH 5-YEAR PLAN TARGET LEVELS FOR CHEESE, GREEN VEGETABLES, MILK, AND OTHER PRODUCE HAVE ALREADY REACHED 60 PERCENT FULL-
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FILLMENT AS PLAN PERIOD APPROACHES MIDWAY POINT. HE STATED THAT LENINGRAD'S NEW AGRICULTURAL COMPLEXES WILL RESOLVE THE MEAT AND EGG PROBLEMS; THAT THE MEAT SITUATION IS ALREADY IMPROVING AS JUDGED BY SUPPLIES IN THE SHOPS; AND THAT WITH ADVENT NEW COMPLEXES EGG PRODUCTION WILL EVENTUALLY RISE TO THE SURPLUS LEVEL OF 1.5 BILLION.

3. COMMENT. THIS IS THE SECOND YEAR IN POST'S RECOLLECT-
ION THAT ZNANIYE LECTURER HAS ACKNOWLEDGED BELOW NORM
MEAT SUPPLIES. LAST APRIL ELBAKIAN STATED THAT MEAT
CONSUMPTION WAS DOWN BY 11 PERCENT IN 1976, AND HE
REPORTED AT THAT TIME A PER CAPITA MEAT CONSUMPTION
LEVEL OF 85.9 KILOGRAMS. HIS LATEST FIGURES INDICATE
1977 MEAT CONSUMPTION LEVEL MAY EVEN BE SLIGHTLY LOWER
THAN THAT OF 1976. END COMMENT. BUCHANAN

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